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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a model adapted from Zenger and Zenger's (1992) Ten-Step Curricular Planning Process Model. The adapted version, which was used to revise and update a university-level curriculum in Journalism and Mass Communications, includes the following steps: (1) identify challenges; (2) determine needs; (3) develop role and mission statement and department-level objectives; (4) develop sequence-level objectives; (5) develop course-level objectives; (6) design sequences; and (7) assessment. The department in which this model was employed was in a state of transition thus, it was necessary to carefully examine courses and sequences, and articulate purposes and objectives for each in order to brace for change, and develop a plan for the future and assess student outcomes. As a result, the unit more clearly specified its purposes, revised its curriculum and devised means to more effectively incorporate the teaching efforts of adjunct faculty. The department now enjoys a more open dialog among faculty regarding course content. Appendices include the curriculum development model, sequence-level objectives, and course-level objectives. (AEF)

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A General Model of Curriculum Development for the Department in Transition

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a model adapted from that of Zenger and Zenger (1992) in which the authors describe a Ten-Step Curricular Planning Process Model. The adapted version described in this paper was used to revise and update a university-level curriculum in Journalism and Mass Communications. The department in which this model was employed was in a state of transition thus, it was necessary to (1) carefully examine courses and sequences and (2) articulate purposes and objectives for each in order to brace for change, develop a plan for the future and assess student outcomes. As a result, the unit more clearly specified its purposes, revised its curriculum and devised means to more effectively incorporate the teaching efforts of adjunct faculty. The department now enjoys a more open dialog among faculty regarding course content.

BACKGROUND

Universities and their respective departments are increasingly being required to demonstrate accountability in terms of student outcomes and performances. The learning experiences offered to students through the curricula are intuitively key factors that will shape a student's knowledge and abilities at the end of their college careers. Thus, a solid and well-designed curriculum is necessary for accurate measurement of student outcomes and departmental effectiveness.

The need for the curriculum development model described here came about as the result of numerous internal and external factors including the need to assess student outcomes. The unit in which this model was applied is a department of Journalism and Mass Communication at a state-supported university in the midwest.

This paper is divided into three major sections. Section I provides a description of the model employed by the department, Section II describes results of the process and conclusions are offered in Section III.

Section I: Curriculum Development Model

Although a number of different tactics could have been employed to address the problems facing the department, the model described here was adapted from that of Zenger and Zenger (1992). The model offered by those authors describes a Ten-Step Planning Process model which includes the following: (1) Identify curricular need, (2) Develop curricular goals and objectives, (3) Identify resources and constraints, (4) Organize curriculum committees, (5) Establish roles of personnel, (6) Identify new curricula, (7) Select new curriculum, (8) Design new curriculum, (9) Implement new curriculum and (10) Evaluate curriculum. See Appendix A for a description of the Curriculum Development Model developed for this paper.

The adapted model employs a top-down approach beginning with an analysis of challenges and ending at evaluation. Rausch (1980) describes a hierarchy of goals and this was generally applied to stages in the model in which the articulation of objectives was completed. The author describes the purposes of mission statements (department-level objectives), strategic goals (sequence-level objectives) and operational goals (course-level goals).

Each step of the adapted curriculum development model follows.

Step 1: Identify Challenges

(1) The department, composed of eight full-time faculty, was experiencing or about to experience a great deal of turnover. Two faculty were considering early retirement due to health reasons, two were completing terminal degrees and would be seeking the opportunity to market those credentials and others, who were advising student-media operations, were nearing tenure application dates. This was especially troubling considering that the university administration frowned upon tenuring such faculty whose research and publication activities were sacrificed in order to effectively manage one of the media operations. Added to this was the fact that a new Chair was appointed from within the department in November of 1992 as the result of a health-related emergency situation.

(2) In 1989, the department was created as the result of a merger between a Journalism program that was well-established in the region and a relatively new Broadcasting program. The Chair of the newly created unit experienced numerous difficulties in terms of hostility among faculty and students of the different programs who opposed the merger. Territoriality resulted in a three-year lapse in the areas of curriculum development and sequence restructuring to significantly incorporate cross-media

experiences. The philosophy among some of the faculty towards others in the same department was "Don't touch what isn't yours!"

(3) The need for part-time faculty was becoming greater. This was due to the reduced teaching loads assigned to those full-time faculty conducting research as well as those whose health would not permit them to carry full loads. As such, it was necessary to develop a formal method to ensure that adjunct faculty were providing instructional experiences consistent with the department's goals and needs. Further, the efforts of the part-time faculty directly impacted those of the full-time faculty in sequentially ordered courses.

(4) Some of the sequences that the department offered were "comprehensive" or "professional" in nature. A professional sequence could constitute up to 60 hours of the 125 required by the university. Additionally, a student with a comprehensive major was not required to select a minor. The notion of a comprehensive major was considered outdated by some of the faculty and it was inconsistent with the stated liberal arts mission of the institution. It was necessary to "trim" these sequences down to a more appropriate 36 hour level. Thus, there had to be a logical and systematic way of eliminating courses from the comprehensive sequences while at the same time redistributing important course content to classes that would remain or be created for the newer, shorter sequences.

(5) The unit had been experiencing a slow loss of Student Credit Hour (SCH) production for approximately 5 years. It was felt that by eliminating the comprehensive sequences more students from departments such as Business, Marketing, English, Psychology and History, among others, would be inclined to select a Journalism and Mass Communication major in addition to the major in their primary area. The large comprehensive sequences were seldom if ever paired with a second major in other departments due to the total number of credits required for completion of the General Studies program (45 hours), a primary major (i.e., History - 36 hours) and a Journalism and Mass Communication comprehensive major (60 hours). Thus, the department's SCH

production might be stimulated as the result of attracting not only freshmen but upperclassmen as well.

(6) Assessment was becoming a critical issue in the state and on the campus. The unit did not have measurable objectives described in its Role and Mission statement and the faculty members were not in agreement or were confused regarding expectations of graduates of specific Journalism and Mass Communication sequences. General beliefs existed among the faculty about what was taking place in classes offered in the department but there had not been a concerted effort to clarify responsibilities of each instructor.

Step 2: Determine Needs

Prior to addressing the challenges described above, it was necessary to identify the needs of the department's constituents. In all cases, addressing the long-term needs of the student client-base was considered the highest priority. The following needs were identified:

A. The department needed to articulate its Role and Mission within the College and University. Objectives were to be specified.

B. Discussions regarding the curriculum had to take place in an environment that fostered intra-departmental collegiality, cooperation and innovation.

C. The unit's curriculum had to be revised and updated and these changes had to involve discussions regarding "sacred cows" and individual course content.

D. Documentation had to be produced that would be used to inform existing and new full-time faculty and part-time faculty of individual course objectives in order to maintain consistency through time.

E. A method for identifying too much redundancy between courses in specific sequences had to be developed. Some redundancy would be beneficial - too much would drive students away. On the other hand, it would be necessary to identify large gaps in course content between classes in specific sequences.

F. Each new or revised sequence offered had to be unique.

G. Journalism and Mass Communication students had to receive a true liberal arts education and they had to select a minor or second major outside of the department.

Step 3: Develop Role and Mission Statement and Department-Level Objectives

The third step in the process was to rewrite the department's Role and Mission statement. A unit's Role and Mission statement identifies its domain and responsibilities within a larger context (i.e., College or School), provides direction for the unit and describes its objectives. Mager (1984) states the value of objectives best by saying that

> . . . when clearly defined objectives are lacking, there is no sound basis for the selection or designing of instructional materials, content, or methods. If you don't know where you're going, it is difficult to select a suitable means for getting there (p. 5).

Hill and Dressel (1961) describe the value of objectives in the assessment process.

> If objectives are to give direction and coherence to the educational process, they must be carefully selected and so stated that they provide bases for selection of materials and methods and ultimately for evaluation (p.27).

Considerable time and energy was invested in preparing department-level objectives that described outcomes for all of the unit's graduates regardless of their areas of study. The objectives for the unit, included in its larger Role and Mission statement as well as its section of the undergraduate catalog, include:

> [1] increasing students' understanding of the roles and functions of the mass media in society; [2] educating and training students to manage, create, and analyze mediated messages and [3] preparing students for careers in the media and allied fields.

These three objectives also appear in the assessment instrument used to evaluate student portfolios prior to graduation. This allows the unit's faculty to determine if in fact the curriculum has been designed and instruction delivered in such a way as to meet the objectives. Assessment will be discussed in Step 7 of the model.

Step 4: Develop Sequence-Level Objectives

Step four in the process was to articulate objectives for each of the sequences offered by the department. These sequences included Broadcast Journalism, Broadcast Production Management and Broadcast Sales and Management among others. Selected faculty within the areas of specialization were asked to clearly state what students "should know or be able to do" after completion of one of the sequences described above. In other words, each was asked to play the role of employer and articulate in writing the knowledge or abilities they would find valuable in a graduate who majored in that particular sequence (see Appendix B). These faculty were asked not to review existing courses in the sequences while completing the tasks as it was important to build the ideal sequence not a sequence founded on what might currently be being offered.

Step 5: Develop Course-Level Objectives

In this stage, faculty were asked to articulate objectives for each of the courses to which they were primarily assigned. Again, but more specifically, the task was to articulate concepts or strategies that a student should have a knowledge of as well as the skills that a student should possess upon completion of the course. This was the most

time consuming and the most difficult to complete as some faculty adamantly insisted that they taught "hundreds of things" in a given course. After considerable discussion it was agreed that the majority of learning experiences fall under larger, more general category areas and that these would suffice for the objectives statements (see Appendix C).

Step 6: Design Sequences

The next step in the process consisted of a simple matching exercise. Selected faculty were asked to "build" respective sequences by reviewing each sequence objective to identify courses in which similar objectives appeared.

Occasionally there were sequence objectives that did not have an appropriate match at the course-level. This was an indication of a gap in terms of what "students should know or be able to do" upon completion of a sequence and what they were being exposed to in class. This led to discussions regarding specific course content delivered by individuals. In some cases, faculty members believed that it would be possible to add new material to their courses to eliminate gaps and in others, the creation of courses was justified.

Conversely, redundancy in instructional exercises or content among classes was discovered. This led to numerous discussions regarding the value of appropriate levels of duplication and the problems caused by unnecessary levels of over-duplication.

As a result of the matching of sequence objectives to course objectives, faculty adjusted course content to make the transition from one class to the next more beneficial for students.

Step 7: Evaluate

Articulation of the department-, sequence- and course-level objectives provides the department with numerous assessment tools. This particular unit instituted a Senior

Portfolio requirement at the conclusion of the curriculum development process. Portfolios can be evaluated in terms of the three department-level objectives and the sequence-level objectives. Results of the portfolio reviews can be presented in faculty meetings and can lead to productive discussions regarding student and department successes/deficiencies. Faculty can use course-level objectives to prepare syllabi and to measure instructional success at the conclusion of a semester.

Section II: Results

The process described above took nearly two years to complete. However, the results so far have proven to be beneficial to the department in many ways. The specific results from use of the curriculum development model are described below.

A. One sequence was eliminated from the department's offerings since it did not appear to be significantly different from another already existing sequence.

B. New courses were created to meet the needs of students who would be graduating in the year 2000. Outdated courses were eliminated but important and relevant topics from those were incorporated into existing classes.

C. Existing courses were revised. Objectives for each were clearly articulated and now exist in hardcopy form for students as well as current faculty and new faculty to review and use in preparing syllabi. Incorporating the instructional efforts of part-time faculty into those of the larger body of faculty has been enhanced.

D. Dialog among faculty regarding courses and content has increased. Territoriality appears to be non-existent and members seem to feel that the

unit's sequences are commonly-owned. Insightful discussion surfaces regularly about the department's purposes and future directions.

E. The department is more focused and efficient in terms of instruction delivered.

F. The unit's reputation on campus has been enhanced among administrators and faculty from other academic departments as a result of the elimination of the professional sequences.

G. The unit is more attractive to declared upperclassmen in Art, History, Business, Marketing, Speech and English. These students more often than in the past appear to be considering 36 hour majors in Journalism and Mass Communication in addition to their primary majors. The loss of SCH appears to have slowed but this may be due to cyclical interest in the field and aggressive recruiting efforts in regional high schools and community colleges. As yet is difficult to determine if the department's major production has been influenced.

H. The department has numerous tools to assess student outcomes and faculty performance.

Section III: CONCLUSIONS

Admittedly, some faculty were reluctant to cooperate at first having taught for many years. Those people stated that they saw no need to articulate what they assumed to be common knowledge and understanding regarding departmental objectives, sequence objectives and course objectives and content. After reviewing articulated objectives statements prepared by faculty, it was apparent that this "common knowledge and understanding" did not exist.

It has been suggested that the amount of time needed to complete the process could be significantly shortened by conducting a series of weekend or summer retreats.

This would afford the group larger blocks of time in which to adequately discuss the issues involved. The faculty of this unit conducted the review in weekly ninety-minute faculty meetings.

Curriculum review, evaluation and assessment must be ongoing. Additionally, all faculty must understand the importance of their classroom contributions in terms of the overall program. Further, faculty must be encouraged and committed to a regular review of department-, sequence- and course-level objectives. This is extremely difficult considering demands for time and energy.

Overall, the top-down approach would appear to be more efficient than a bottom-up approach. In the top-down approach, the department-level objectives serve as the engine for course content. In the bottom-up approach, the course-level objectives would dictate the directions for the department. Sequence and course objectives must serve or support the goals of the overall program.

Appendix A

Curriculum Development Model

I.	Identify Challenges.

What curricular, personnel or evaluation problems exist?

II.	Determine Needs.

Where should the department and its constituents be in the future?
What would be desirable outcomes once challenges are addressed?

III.	Develop Role and Mission Statement and Department-level Objectives.

What is our role within the College/School and University?
What can we do best?
How do we want to position ourselves?

IV.	Develop Sequence-level Objectives.

What should a student know when finished with the coursework in this sequence/major?
What should a student be able to do when finished with the coursework in this sequence/major?

V.	Develop Course-Level Objectives.

What should a student know when finished with each specific course?
What should a student be able to do when finished with each specific course?

VI.	Design Sequences.

In which courses do objectives match sequence objectives?
Are new courses justified or can existing courses be adjusted to include knowledge or skill material rather than creating new courses?
Is there significant/unnecessary redundancy in terms of instruction in knowledge and skill areas between sequentially ordered classes?
Are there significant gaps in terms of instruction in knowledge and skill areas between sequentially ordered classes?

VII.	Assessment.

Are the department-level, sequence-level and course-level objectives being achieved?
How can/should the unit change to achieve the objectives?
What are the department's instructional strengths and weaknesses?
What challenges and needs exist?

Appendix B
Sequence-Level Objectives

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
Major: Public Relations

OVERALL GOALS:

The purposes of this major are:

1. To see problems as opportunities cloaked in challenge.

2. To create an understanding of what can and cannot be accomplished through the use of public relations.

3. To provide background so students are aware of the ethical and legal considerations of public relations plans/programs.

4. To provide knowledge so that students can research and plan effective PR programs.

5. To provide skills/info so students know when and how to implement a PR program.

6. To provide skills/info so students know how to evaluate the program.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this major, the student should:

1. Understand the state of the art and explain the current body of knowledge.

2. Understand the professional and ethical problems confronting the public relations field and its individual practitioners.

3. Understand the administrative-managerial role of public relations activity in various organizations and the value of such activity to the organization.

4. Understand how public relations management is associated with issues management, crisis management and conflict management.

5. Understand the technical and strategic tasks and responsibilities of public relations practitioners.

6. Be able to recognize a PR problem/opportunity.

Sequence-Level Objectives (Continued)

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
Major: Public Relations

7. Be able to research the problem/opportunity.

8. Be able to identify the target audience(s).

9. Be able to determine appropriate goals and objectives.

10. Be able to plan and execute effective programming.

11. Be able to write questionnaires, do surveys.

12. Be able to compile survey information and use it to evaluate.

13. Have an understanding of the workings of budgeting, business and finance.

14. Be able to plan and direct controlled communication such as advertising, brochures, newsletters, videos, public service announcements and pitch letters.

15. Be able to plan and utilize uncontrolled communication such as press conferences, interviews, and news releases.

16. Be able to work with media professionals.

17. Be able to make an effective oral presentation.

18. Be able to make an effective written presentation.

19. Be able to effectively use a computer to create, search, or locate a computer database.

Appendix C
Course-Level Objectives

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
Course JMC 440 - Mass Media Research

COURSE GOALS:

The course is designed to accommodate the needs and interests of students of Mass Communication (i.e., journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising).

Specifically, the course seeks to introduce students to: examples of mass communication research; methods of mass communication research; typical research designs and; elementary statistics to be performed on a hand calculator or the UNK computing system.

The goals of the course are to offer students the opportunities to develop skills required to enter the fields of media research, audience research, or program research and to become more sophisticated consumers of research in general.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of the course the student should be able to:
or
Upon completion of the course the student should know/understand:

1. Understand examples of mass media research.

2. Understand experimental, content analysis, and survey methods.

3. Distinguish between quantitative research and qualitative research.

4. Understand samples, sample sizes, sampling, reliability, validity, replication, measurement, levels of data, variables and error.

5. Conduct a simple mass media research project.

6. Discuss design methodology, reliability, and validity as they relate to examples of mass media research.

7. Understand the scientific method.

8. To construct a questionnaire for use in a research project.

9. Administer a survey to a sample.

10. Understand the importance of protecting subjects and maintaining the confidentiality of their responses.

11. Propose examples of research in fields such as broadcasting, public relations, journalism, and advertising.

12. Enter data into a computer.

13. Specify statistics to be used to analyze data.

14. Analyze data and discuss the same in non-technical terms.

15. Write a simple research report.

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